

Tower Grove Park Shelter Twenty-five  
(Children's Playground Summerhouse)  
Tower Grove Park  
4255 Arsenal Street  
St. Louis  
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1137-R

HABS  
MO,  
96-SALV,  
46R-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
REDUCED COPY OF MEASURED DRAWING  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. MO-1137-R

TOWER GROVE PARK SHELTER TWENTY-FIVE  
(Children's Playground Summerhouse)

Location: Park headquarters at 4255 Arsenal Street, St. Louis, Missouri. The shelter lies 1200' west of the Grand Boulevard gate, between the northeast drive and the main east-west drive, within the original boundaries of Tower Grove Park.

USGS Cahokia Quadrangle, Universal Transverse  
Mercator Coordinates: 15.739820.4276470

Present Owner: City of St. Louis.

Present Use: Public picnic shelter.

Significance: The structure is a well-preserved example of the picturesque and eclectic design favored by British and American landscape architects in the nineteenth century. It was originally designed as the focal point of the first children's playground in Tower Grove Park.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Fall 1870-Spring 1871 (Tower Grove Park Comptroller's Report 1868, p.98, builder payment 2/9/1871).
2. Architect: Eugene L. Greenleaf (Comp. 1868, p.122, retained to build summerhouse in children's playground, 6/27/71.) For biographical information see the HABS report on Tower Grove Park (MO-1137).
3. Original and subsequent owners: The City of St. Louis. For further description of property, see the HABS Report on Tower Grove Park (MO-1137).
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers, etc: A contract was made with William E. Cotter for the building of a summerhouse at the children's playground in return for \$1175 (TGP checkbook 11/10/70-3/24/71, TGP Box III).

Roofing was done by Hull and Cozzens of St. Louis (Comp. 1868, p.124, 7/5/71); the iron ornament (on cupola) was supplied by T.R. Pullis (Comp. 1868, p.128, 8/5/71) and the lumber by Eau Claire (Comp. 1868, p.112, 5/4/71), both of St. Louis.

5. Original plans, construction, etc.: Originally the focal point of the children's playground, the present shelter was built with eight trellises radiating from it in line with the eight supporting columns. These broke the surrounding site into croquet grounds and were constructed by the Park's work force under the direction of the Park's first supervisor, Francis Tunica (Comp. 1868, p.72, payment for making playground trellises, 8/3/70). A sketched planting plan is located in the Park Supervisor's Miscellaneous plan file.
6. Alterations and additions: The structure was shorn of its accompanying weathervane and trellises at an unknown date; it lost its specific function as a children's summerhouse upon the creation in 1910 of a new playground, 320' x 90', located west of the north-south drive (Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners Tower Grove Park, 1911, p.11).

B. Sources of Information

1. Old views: View published in MacAdam, 1883 showing trellises. (See HABS photocopy).

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

1. Manuscripts, etc.: The sketched planting plan (See HABS photocopy) in the Miscellaneous plan file; Tower Grove Park checkbooks and Receipts and Vouchers for 1867-1889; the Reports of the Board from 1869-1898; and Shaw's Comptroller Report Books 1868, 1875, 1882, and 1888 are in the custody of Park Superintendent Miss Bernice E. Gurney, and will probably be transferred from her office at 4274 Magnolia Avenue to the Shaw Manuscript Collection in the John S. Lehmann Library at the Missouri Botanical Garden, 2345 Tower Grove Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri, by the end of the summer of 1974.
2. Deed Books: City Hall, Market Street, St. Louis, Missouri.
3. Secondary sources:

Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners, Tower Grove Park.  
St. Louis Nixon-Jones Printing, 1899-1919.

\_\_\_\_\_. St. Louis: Arcade Print Shop, 1920.

\_\_\_\_\_. St. Louis: Mound City Press, 1921-1942.

\_\_\_\_\_. St. Louis: Allied Printing, 1942-1959.

MacAdam, David H. Tower Grove Park. St. Louis:  
R.P. Studley and Co., 1883.

Prepared by: Carolyn Hamm  
Field Historian  
National Park Service  
St. Louis, Missouri  
July, 1974

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The garden pavilion with elaborate decoration is a variation of the octagonal pavilion with cupola which appears in several locations in Tower Grove Park.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Octagonal shape, eight bays, each 12'-0" wide 35'-0" high to spire top.
2. Foundations: Concrete pedestals under columns.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Eight octagonal cedar columns painted black rest on concrete pedestals and carry round arches. The spandrels, painted white, have intricately cut tracery in scroll quatrefoil motifs, painted bluish-gray. A vertical member runs down the center of the paneled entablature in each bay. An overhanging white fascia board and black cornice are carried by scrolled brackets above the piers.
4. Structural system, framing: Wooden framing.
5. Roof:
  - a. Shape and covering: The standing-seam roof, bowed to a bell shape, is carried by rafters connected to an octagonal compression ring from which rises the octagonal cupola. The sheet metal roofing is painted black.
  - b. Cornice, eaves: The overhang of the roof is 2'-6", brackets at the eight corners.
  - c. Cupola: The octagonal superstructure corners have pilasters painted gray. The background of each bay is painted white with sand dollar motifs painted bluish gray in the center. A band of white wooden pendent tracery hangs from the cornice of the cupola. The dome has a small spire capped with a brown orb on top.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: Open octagonal plan.
2. Flooring: The brick courses form a radial pattern, around the center and around the octagonal-shaped stone centerpiece. Stone masonry runs around the outside edge.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: The interior sides of the spandrels are paneled in square sections by two-by-fours. There are exposed bowed roof rafters.

- D. Site: The original radial planting around this pavilion no longer exists; the site is now surrounded by large shady deciduous trees, and stands 1200' west of the Grand Boulevard gate, between the north-east drive and the main east-west drive.

Prepared by: Peter Dessauer  
Field Historian  
National Park Service  
St. Louis, Missouri  
August, 1975

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Tower Grove Park and Missouri Botanical Garden Project was jointly sponsored by the Historic American Buildings Survey of the National Park Service, the Board of Commissioners of Tower Grove Park, and the Board of Trustees of the Missouri Botanical Gardens.

Recorded under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, and Kenneth L. Anderson, HABS Principal Architect, the project was conducted during the summer of 1974 and 1975 at the Historic American Buildings Survey field office at the Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis.

1974 Team: Robert Harvey, Project Supervisor, (Landscape Architect); Steven Bauer, Project Foreman, architect, (University of Kansas); Carolyn Hamm, project historian, (Cornell University); Patrick Ackerman, student assistant architect, (Washington University); Suzanne Fauber, student assistant landscape architect, (University of Virginia); and Carol Macht, student assistant landscape architect, (University of Michigan).

1975 Team: Stuart Mertz, A.S.L.A., project supervisor, (landscape architect); Steven Bauer, Project Foreman, (Columbia University); Peter Dessauer, project historian, (Clemson University); Lennard A. Roberts, student assistant architect, (Cornell University); John R. Temmink, student assistant architect, (University of Virginia); and Theodore Torpy, landscape architect, (WASO).

The drawings were revised by HABS architect Paul Dolinsky, and the written data were edited by HABS Architectural Historian Denys Peter Myers, in the HABS Washington office in 1983. The photographs were taken by HABS/HAER Photographer Jet Lowe in 1983.